



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

2023/24





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WELCOME

MAYOR'S FOREWORD – A YEAR TO BE PROUD OF

All involved in the work of this Combined Authority should feel very proud about what we have collectively achieved in this past year.

Our organisation is now a vastly different entity, in its make-up, its outlook, and its performance, and, to my mind, that's a product of how this region has come together in pursuit of its shared ambitions.

On good governance, given our diversity of political persuasions, it is all the more impressive that we've been able in much of our various dealings to successfully navigate our differences, setting aside what sets us apart, and instead putting common endeavour first. And as we've progressed along our improvement journey, even when we have disagreed, we have for the most part been willing to state how and where our views align, making clear our capacity for collaborative effort towards the types of change we each want to see across our communities.

As we enter the final year of this administration – my first as Mayor, and our second as a Combined Authority – we do so arguably better equipped than perhaps at any point in our short history. Indeed, in some instances we have not just substantially improved but have actually led the way nationally in terms of best practice and exemplary output.

Furthermore, based on what I have seen over the course of the 2023/24 municipal year, I have every confidence that this organisation and the excellent partnerships that make it possible will rise to any and every challenge ahead of us.



Dr Nik Johnson
Mayor of Cambridgeshire
and Peterborough

CHIEF EXEC FOREWORD – REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF COLLABORATION, DELIVERY AND INNOVATION

As we reflect on the past year, I am incredibly proud to present this report highlighting some of the remarkable achievements, continuous improvement and progress made by our organisation.

Throughout the year, we have demonstrated unwavering commitment to our mission of fostering economic growth, sustainability, and community prosperity. This report serves as a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team as we embed our improvements, as well as the collaborative spirit that drives us forward.

Collaboration and engagement have been at the heart of our success this year. We have strengthened our relationships with our constituent councils and our partnerships with key stakeholders, including government bodies, community organisations, and businesses, to collectively address challenges and seize opportunities. Together, we have leveraged our collective expertise and resources to deliver impactful projects that make a difference in people's lives. Through effective planning, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement, we have successfully brought numerous projects to fruition, making meaningful contributions to the prosperity and well-being of our region. By fostering a culture of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, we have strengthened trust and partnerships, laying the foundation for a brighter, more prosperous future for all. We know we have more to do and continually improve and be a learning organisation.

From groundbreaking infrastructure projects to innovative community initiatives, we have remained focused on delivering tangible outcomes that benefit our communities. Innovation has been a driving force behind our efforts to address complex challenges and embrace new opportunities. We have embraced innovative technologies, methodologies, and approaches to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our work. Whether it's harnessing data analytics to inform decision-making, piloting new sustainability initiatives, or exploring emerging trends in green technology, our commitment to innovation has enabled us to stay ahead of the curve and drive positive change in our communities.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on our successes, embracing new challenges, and working collaboratively to create positive change. Together, we have the power to shape a future that is inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous for all.



Rob Bridge
Chief Executive

WHO WE ARE

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was created in 2017 after an historic agreement between the UK Government and the seven councils that together make up the Combined Authority (Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Peterborough City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council).

The aim of the agreement was to devolve decisions away from Westminster so they can be made by the communities they affect.

We have a range of responsibilities including transport, infrastructure, planning, economic growth, business support and adult education. We receive our funding in several different ways, from a devolved transport budget and a £20m a year funding allocation from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to grow the economy. We play an important role in developing bold, ambitious plans for the future, advocating for and representing the region to bring in investment and funding to grow the economy for the benefit of all. We firmly believe that together we are greater than the sum of our parts and the people of this region are best placed to determine its future.

The Combined Authority model allows us to collaborate with existing local government structures to make collective decisions and work with other partners including business, the universities, health and more, to jointly promote our region, to tackle inequalities and the impact of climate change.

We are held to account by the Mayor and representatives from the seven councils of the Combined Authority, who sit on committees that support the final decisions of the Combined Authority Board. Our board is made up of the leaders of our seven councils, the Chair of our Business Board, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Chairman of the Fire Authority, and Chair of the NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board. Our Board is chaired by a directly elected Mayor voted in by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents every four years. This report illustrates how together we are growing the local economy and providing better jobs, housing, skills and transport for our residents.



OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES

MAYORAL AMBITION

To have a healthier and more prosperous Combined Authority region.

STRATEGIC VISION

A prosperous and sustainable Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Driven by our values and using our collective voice and strengths, we seek inclusive good growth for an equitable, resilient, healthier, and connected region.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



ACHIEVING GOOD GROWTH



AMBITIOUS SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



ENABLING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY



ACHIEVING BEST VALUE AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

MAYORAL PLEDGES

Promote, protect, and grow our unique Fens

A locally determined, innovative and public transport system that is fit for the future

Working with Integrated Care System to support the delivery of better health outcomes and address health inequalities in the region

Creating a strong sense of place and cultural identity for our region

IMPACT AT A GLANCE



£181M

Funding Received by CPCA



£112M

Funding Awarded by CPCA



Supported the start-up of

254

businesses



Upskilled nearly

1,800

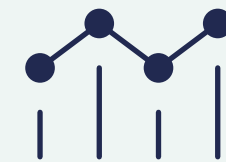
people



Secured

£6.2M

in funding for regional active travel development



Established

3

social enterprise hubs driving economic growth and community cohesion



Created over

800

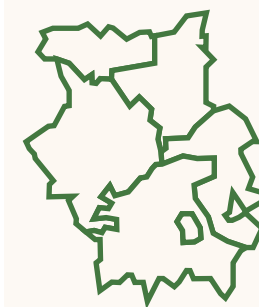
apprenticeships and 570 new employment opportunities



Facilitated over

4,000

participants in numeracy courses



Allocated almost

£10M

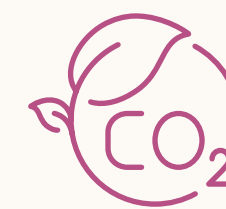
from the UKSPF to enable the initiation of 38 projects across six councils within the Combined Authority area



Delivered

34

successful market town projects



Replaced

1M

car trips and saved 500 tonnes of CO2 emissions with the use of e-scooters and e-bikes

ACHIEVING GOOD GROWTH

A strong and sustainable economy that is socially inclusive, environmentally responsible and globally competitive. We seek to increase productivity and reduce inequality.



MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME (PHASE 1)

The Combined Authority is helping the region's market towns to thrive and continues to invest to ensure these areas remain vibrant and thriving places, driving growth and sustainable regeneration in support of rural communities.

The programme has enabled the Combined Authority to successfully support the revitalisation of several high streets across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, including improved signage and wayfinding, new public realm and shop frontage improvements, and WiFi and CCTV infrastructure to enable towns to become more efficient with the introduction of smarter technology.

There are also some notable key projects funded through the programme, including in Fenland, where the Combined Authority invested over £1.5m to bring forward a new pavilion and water park in Wisbech, and new Community Centre and Museum space in Chatteris. A further £2m has been invested in support of the March Future High Streets Fund Scheme to improve transport infrastructure in the town.

In East Cambs, we invested over £1.8m in support of two new business centres in Soham (Spencer Mill Business Centre and NIAB Agritech Business Centre), and the expansion of the E-Space Business Centre in Littleport.

In Huntingdonshire, we invested over £4.1M into St Neots in support of the town's Future High Street Fund Scheme. There has also been significant investment in Huntingdon, which includes the expansion of the Oliver Cromwell museum, and in St Ives to improve the market square. Additionally, over £500K has been invested into Ramsey in support of a new Community Civic Centre for the town.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Significant Funding Allocation: £14.2 million from the Combined Authority, supplemented by over £12.5 million of external match funding,

Successful Project Implementation: Out of the 52 projects in the programme's portfolio, 34 have been successfully completed by March 2024.

Future-focused Planning: With £7.35 million profiled to be expended by March 2025, the Market Towns Programme underscores a forward-looking approach towards sustainable regeneration and continued support for the vitality of market towns in the region.





CASE STUDY

SHOP FRONT GRANT SCHEME TO BENEFIT FURTHER MARKET TOWNS

The Combined Authority extended its successful Shop Front Grant Scheme to St Neots and Ramsey town centres in the year, supporting more businesses to repair and improve their shop fronts.

The scheme aims to improve the aesthetics and accessibility of our high streets, encouraging residents to shop locally and attract more local businesses to the area.

Applications will be reviewed monthly, and examples of improvements include, but are not limited to, repairs, improving accessibility, repainting, signage, external lighting, repair of external stonework and brickwork and other professional fees.

The scheme is funded by the Combined Authority's Market Towns programme and is delivered jointly by BID Huntingdon First and HDC.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing, Cllr Sam Wakeford, said: "We are thrilled that we can now extend this popular scheme into St Neots and Ramsey town centres. The scheme has been a success in St Ives and Huntingdon, and I look forward to seeing that replicated."

Mayor Dr Nik Johnson, said:

Community and commerce; this initiative scores for both. The Combined Authority is massively committed to the market towns and this scheme has been a real winner. Extending it widens opportunity, making these town centres ever more attractive to visitors, shoppers, investors, new businesses, and to the residents who love where they live.



MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME (PHASE 2)

In March 2023, the Combined Authority approved the business case for a continuation of the market towns programme and has committed £2.5m investment to strengthen local communities and groups and to support for social enterprises and community-owned businesses. This runs to March 2025.

The Programme objectives are to safeguard and enhance social capital, employment opportunities, and skills in market towns throughout Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by:

- Boosting the local social enterprise ecosystem through the implementation of Social Enterprise Hub space.
- Support Community ownership of local assets and boosting young people's engagement with STEM.

The Programme will deliver the following key outcomes:

- **Stream 1** – Community ownership of local businesses – to establish a dedicated support programme, community “support package” and bursary funding for community groups in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with a focus of revitalising assets in market towns and rural areas. Over five community groups supported to date.
- **Stream 2** – Social enterprise hubs - the creation of one or more social enterprise hubs in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. The hubs will support the growth of social entrepreneurship and the social economy across market towns and rural areas, providing coworking / business startup space for social enterprises alongside community space and a retail offer for residents and communities. A total of £1,175,800 grant has been successfully awarded in support of three hubs, and all scheduled for completion before March 2025. These are Allia Printworks (Papworth), CCORRN (March) and People & Animals Community Farm (Wisbech).
- **Stream 3** – STEM exhibition programme – to support the capital element of an educational programme, to be delivered via pop-up science centres, located in publicly owned buildings, community or educational facilities in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough market towns and rural areas.

- The pop-up centres will be accessed by children, families, schools, and adult groups and aim to raise awareness and aspirations for STEM related study and careers. A total of five STEM roadshows held to date in Fenland and Huntingdonshire, engaging with over 10,000 local community participants and visitors.

The expected benefits of the Programme include:

- Businesses and jobs created and safeguarded in the third sector, social enterprise ecosystem, and community interest groups.
- Revitalisation of market towns by bringing back vacant assets into use through community ownership.
- Driving footfall in market towns by restoring the service offer and increasing local amenity
- Increasing the local sense of pride in place.
- Increased educational aspirations of local school children in market towns and improved long-term outcomes through STEM workshops.
- Creation of community and social enterprise space for use by local people, increasing social vitality and reducing social isolation.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Community Empowerment: Over five community groups supported, fostering local business ownership and revitalizing market towns and rural areas.

Social Enterprise Development: Three social enterprise hubs successfully established, driving economic growth and community cohesion.

STEM Engagement: Five STEM roadshows held, engaging well over 10,000 participants in Fenland and Huntingdonshire, promoting STEM education and career aspirations, enhancing long-term regional outcomes.

CASE STUDY

PLUNKETT UK EMPOWERING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

The Combined Authority has commissioned Plunkett UK to help community groups across the region take ownership and operation of local assets, such as pubs, shops, cafés and other community buildings, which are vacant or at risk of closure. This ambition is to protect key local services that benefit the local area. This partnership builds upon the work and investment made to date under the Combined Authority's Phase 1 but with a new emphasis – one of supporting communities and delivering inclusive growth.

A good example of this in action is the **Haddenham Sports and Social Club**, which will use the development and feasibility grant of £5,000 to revitalise their building so they can widen their membership and explore what additional 'more than' services it can offer the community.

The club is already a recognised Warm Hub which brings people from across the community together.

Derek Wakefield, Treasurer at the Club, said:



This grant will help us pay for an architectural designer to think about ways to better use the space and improve accessibility for a building that is 70 years old. It is part of changing the aesthetics of the club and futureproofing it for coming generations.



PETERBOROUGH STATION QUARTER

The Peterborough Station Quarter will be a new district in this ambitious and transforming city. It will create a welcoming series of new public spaces supported by a mix of new homes and offices conveniently connected by high quality rail and bus links and safe and attractive cycle options – a super connected gateway to the city and the wider region.

Since the successful outcome of the Levelling Up bid last year, the project has moved at pace. Working with Peterborough City Council, the Combined Authority achieved a major milestone in securing Government's approval of the Outline Business Case for a £47,850,000 investment for the first phase of the Peterborough Station Quarter.

This funding will provide a new western station entrance and improvements to the existing entrance, including a new station square and active travel improvements. This will ease pressure on roads into the centre. Green areas with biodiversity, community spaces and better pedestrian and cycle connections to the bus station and city centre will improve accessibility, encourage active travel, and help to reduce carbon emissions.

Improving passenger journeys will encourage more rail travel, stimulating local and regional economies. It will free up land for commercial and residential developments and help Peterborough attract inward investment, knowledge-intensive and high-level employers. Work will continue at pace over the next year to develop a Full Business Case for Government's approval and the start of construction.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Effective Planning – Preparation of the Outline Business Case – a key document to demonstrate the project continues to have strategic and economic value.

Continued Delivery – Approval by the Government of the Outline Business Case - the green light to continue the project's development.

Strategic Achievement – £47,850,000 investment secured.



TRANSFORMING CITIES FUNDING

The Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) stands as a cornerstone of our commitment to enhancing transport infrastructure and fostering sustainable mobility across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

With an allocated sum of £95 million, the Combined Authority has diligently pursued TCF's multifaceted objectives, striving not only to improve access to employment opportunities but also to tackle pressing issues such as air pollution and congestion.

This includes the ZEBRA project, which delivered part of the funding for 30 new state of the art electric double-deckers. We have also reduced congestion and unwanted traffic in towns such as St Ives, through packages of work such as changes to on-street parking restrictions in the town centre area, to reduce illegal and inconsiderate parking, focussing on reducing congestion pinch points in the town centre, rat running and improving bus access as well as walking and cycling signage improvements.



CASE STUDY

CENTRE FOR GREEN TECHNOLOGY

The Centre for Green Technology at Peterborough College marks a significant milestone in the city's pursuit of sustainability and economic growth. This state-of-the-art facility, located within Inspire Education Group's Peterborough College campus, is designed to equip students with advanced knowledge and skills in modern construction methods, emerging technologies, alternative heat sources, and electric vehicle technology. Developed in collaboration with local employers, the innovative curriculum aims to bridge the gap between classroom education and industry needs, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the construction landscape and the transition to a net-zero carbon economy.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Substantial Funding Support:

The project received significant financial backing from key stakeholders, including £2.471 million from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) via the Transforming Cities Fund and an additional £400,000 from the Local Growth Fund. This substantial investment, coupled with a £1.9 million package from Peterborough City Council via the Towns Fund, underscores the commitment to advancing green skills and fostering economic prosperity in the region.

Industry Collaboration and Curriculum Development:

The Centre for Green Technology's innovative curriculum has been developed in close collaboration with local employers, ensuring alignment with industry needs and emerging trends in the green technology sector. This proactive approach highlights the project's commitment to bridging the gap between education and industry, preparing students for successful careers in high-growth fields related to sustainability and green technology.

Construction Commencement and Strategic Partnership:

The commencement of construction marks a significant step forward for the project, with partners Clegg Construction managing the build. Their partnership with Inspire Education Group underscores a shared commitment to excellence and innovation, laying the foundation for a transformative educational facility that will play a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce and advancing Peterborough's prominence in the green technology sector.

GROWTH HUB

The CPCA Growth Hub, funded by the Combined Authority, connects businesses in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with essential support, information, and funding. Our expert team provides tailored advice to help businesses at any stage, from startup to expansion. The Growth Hub simplifies access to resources through a comprehensive Knowledge Base and direct assistance from our dedicated advisers, ensuring your business has the tools to thrive.

2023/24 saw the Growth Hub reach more minority groups across the region, ensuring that services are more accessible for anyone starting or running a business across the region. Inclusivity has been a significant campaign and a source of pride for the Growth Hub team in the last year. The Growth Hub has also shaped its offering due to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund offering other grants in local authority regions. Its revamped website has an interactive map which quickly identifies the grants available

www.cpcagrowthhub.co.uk



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Increased Engagement:

Streamlined business growth support services in the region, engaging with 2,340 enquiries and garnering 12,876 website hits.

Enhanced Accessibility: Supported 254 businesses to start up and facilitated 3,744 business hours of mentoring.

Service Evolution: Adapting to complement the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Growth Hub revamps its website to include an interactive map, quickly identifying available grants, while also making 356 referrals to import/export programs, showcasing a comprehensive approach to supporting regional businesses.

CASE STUDY

TEST LABS EXPANDS WITH NEW VIRUS LABORATORY

Test Labs is a medical device testing company which has benefitted from a Combined Authority grant to support its growth plans.

The grant has allowed it to open a second, fully kitted-out virus laboratory, allowing space for even more ground-breaking work.

The new virus lab offers a tailored set of testing services complemented by state-of-the-art specialist equipment with the expansion coming in response to the growing market demand that has exceeded supply capacity, both locally and globally.

Test Labs is the UK's only accredited UK laboratory for crucial medical device reprocessing – a process which enables their safe reuse.

The investment has further boosted Test Labs as a vital resource for medical and device manufacturers and organisations to test their own innovative products. The grant enabled the creation of new jobs and opportunity for Peterborough, as well as new markets for the business. Test Labs has grown from a small enterprise to a significant part of the region's thriving medtech and healthcare industries. The investment also supports the spread of growth in those sectors further into the region, supporting Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's status as a growing and globally competitive medtech economy.



SUPPORTING KEY SECTORS

As part of the Economic Growth Strategy for the region, the Combined Authority is supporting some of the region's key industrial sectors, supporting business, innovation and jobs.

LIFE SCIENCES

Once such sector is life sciences and the Combined Authority, through its Local Growth Fund, invested £2.3 million in the pioneering TTP (The Technology Partnership) campus, an incubator supporting the company to work collaboratively across disciplines.

One of the biggest blockers for growth in the life sciences and healthtech sector in the Greater Cambridge economy is a lack of available lab space. In 2023 Bidwells reported that combined demand for lab and office space in this area was at record levels. Investment in the TTP campus by the Combined Authority, has helped contribute to tackling the acute challenge.

The campus, also designed with sustainability and ecology in mind, is made up of three key buildings – the Tech Barn including bio labs, a laser lab and advanced manufacturing for larger projects; The Exchange, with a gym, restaurant, event spaces and open spaces for socialising and collaboration, and The Hive, which offers lab and office space. The campus, which cost £55.2 million, was a winner in the Greater Cambridge Design and Construction (GCDC) Awards 2024.

Dr Sam Hyde, Managing Director of TTP, said:

“

Our new campus will enable our technically brilliant people to come together and work across disciplines. It will enhance the way we work alongside, and deliver for, our clients from the early ideas through to commercial production.

”

AGRI-TECH

The Combined Authority is working collaboratively with partners in the east, in Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, which contains

some of the UK's best farmland, to help make the region a global innovation centre for agri-tech.

With food security, biodiversity and net zero major issues for agriculture, supporting innovation and good growth in the sector will be vital to the future of the globe, with the East of England well placed to develop commercial solutions. Among the recommendations in the Combined Authority's agri-tech sector strategy is to support an environment which allows agri-tech firms to scale up, and to de-risk the adoption of new technologies, providing regionally specific grant schemes for projects of varying sizes.

In autumn 2023, working with Innovate UK and partner councils, a £7.5 million programme was launched with Government to drive innovation and business growth in agri-tech, agri-biotech, and food-tech. Grant funding of between £25,000 and £300,000 was available for projects that provide exceptional impact to the agri-tech, agri-biotech and food-tech innovation cluster. Several projects in Cambridgeshire won funding through the programme and a second round of funding has now been launched, including a separate scheme for small and micro businesses.

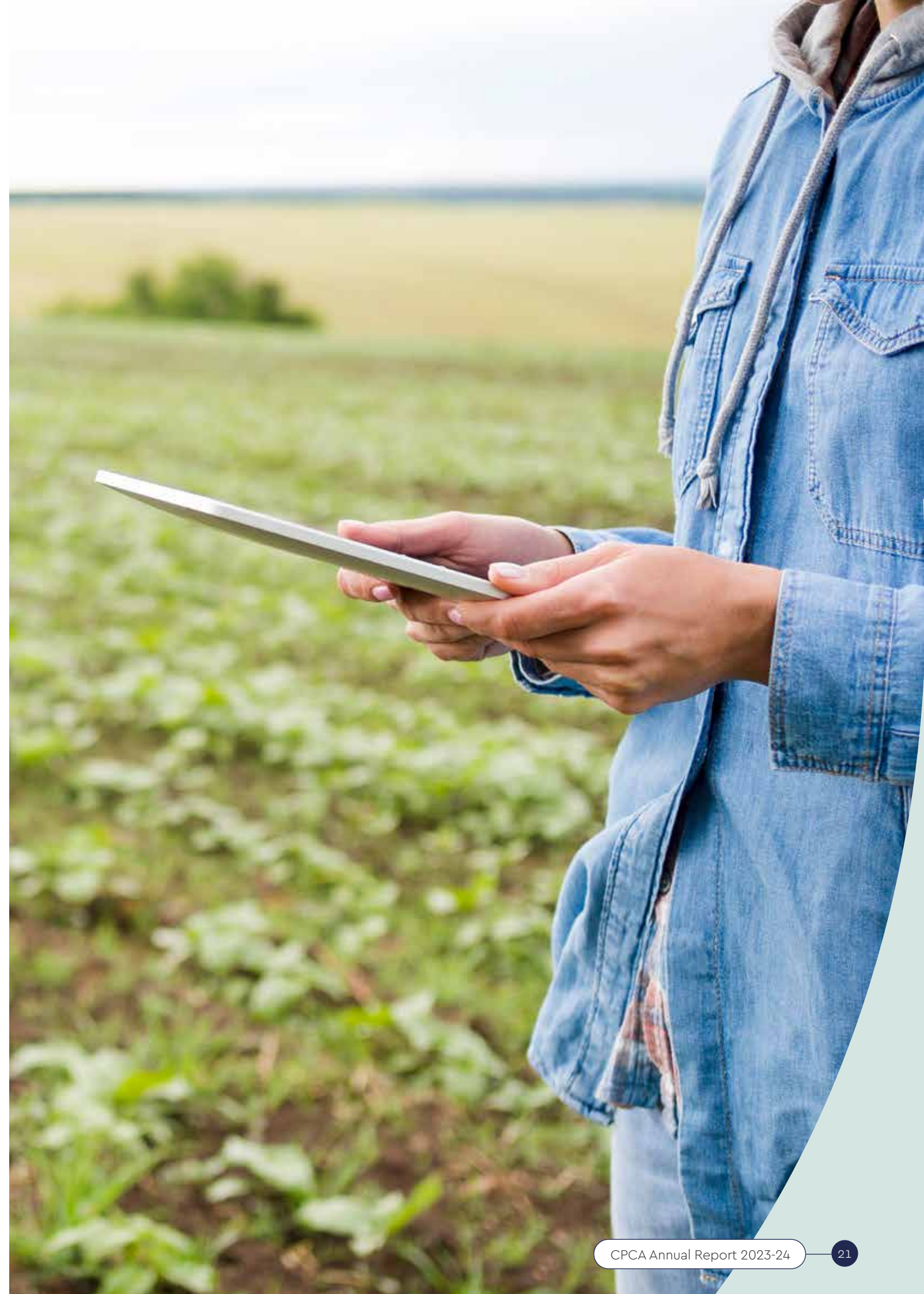
Chair of the Business Board, Al Kingsley, said:

“

This funding is another welcome boost in support of the ambition for our region to become a global centre for agri-tech innovation. We already are a base for cutting edge research, the commercialisation of ideas and successful businesses, and with the right funding, collaboration and support, agri-tech in this region can be a major driver of sustainable economic growth, inward investment and skilled jobs.

”

Among further collaboration is the Combined Authority's role as partner in the LINCAM project across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Lincolnshire, and involving the Universities of Cambridge and Lincoln, to promote further agri-tech innovation in the region. In autumn 2023 the partnership was successful in bringing £4.9 million in grant funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to help further drive the region's ambition to be a global agri-tech pioneer.



AMBITIOUS SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Developing and sustaining a world-class skills system which maximises the potential of our residents, employers, and communities. Delivering a workforce where everyone can succeed according to their talent and their potential and ensuring the skills, tenacity, and resilience of our region enables us to seize opportunities for growth, without leaving anyone behind.



GROWTH WORKS WITH SKILLS

Growth Works with Skills, the region's dedicated skills brokerage service, moved in-house to the Combined Authority at the start of 2024.

Launched in 2020 as part of the Growth Works consortium, the service is now well placed to build further on its initial work. With funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the service works with employers to understand their plans for growth and works with them to help them source the skilled staff they need. As well as one-to-one support, the service runs roundtables, seminars and other events to reach employers more widely.

Help on offer to service users includes supporting plans to attract skilled people, upskilling existing staff, securing high-quality training, and helping to access funding for schemes like apprenticeships and Skills Bootcamps.

Growth Works with Skills is tasked with increasing by 570 the number of job starts in the region and is placing focus on bringing forward more apprenticeships – a key aspiration in the Combined Authority's Skills Strategy. Already the region's numbers of completed apprenticeships are two per cent above the national average, with apprenticeship starts also on the increase, bucking the trend of the national picture which is slightly down.

Growth Works with Skills is working to educate and inform employers of the benefits of apprenticeships, including using existing employers as advocates of the schemes.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Facilitating Skill Development:

Engaged with over 300 businesses and upskilled nearly 1,800 people, with a further 1,800 targeted for 24/25.

Employer Engagement: Through roundtables, seminars, and other events, Growth Works with Skills contributed to the creation of more than 800 new apprenticeships.

Employment Opportunities: Collaborated with employers to create 570 new employment opportunities, particularly for those furthest from the labour market, emphasising the importance of entry-level apprenticeships and internships in achieving this goal.





SUPPORTING EVOLVING NETWORKS' 'APPRENTICESHIP COMMUNITY'

Fast-growing Peterborough business Evolving Networks praised the support of Growth Works with Skills as crucial to its goal of building an 'apprentice community'.

The company provides pioneering internet connectivity services to other businesses and has described apprenticeships as a key pillar of its plans for growth.

Half of their senior Management Board are former apprentices, and a quarter of the staff are currently apprentices.

Evolving Networks' General Manager Ben Wright and its Head of People and Culture Amber Roberts started their apprenticeship journey with Evolving Networks as teenagers and, now in their late 20s, they both occupy senior positions. They have come full circle, now working with Growth Works with Skills to continue to build their base of apprenticeships.

Amber said:

“

Growth Works with Skills have been fantastic for us. Being a small business, we don't pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, so every apprentice we've recently brought through the door they've helped us find funding, invited us to open days, run presentations with them, helped with my people strategy and helped to get the word out about the apprentice army we are looking to build. Their support has been vital in this growth period for Evolving Networks, and I would recommend Growth Works with Skills to any employer.

”

Ben said:

“

For businesses, there's a lot of untapped talent out there, and it just takes someone to give them a chance with an apprenticeship. There are so many success stories I can point to which prove that it works.

”

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND AND RURAL PROSPERITY FUND

The Government's UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) replaced EU funding for regional projects and is aimed at giving local leaders more say in how money is spent. It aims to support Levelling Up in the country by providing opportunities for economic growth, increasing social value and fostering community cohesion and pride of place.

The initiative seeks to invest in three key areas: communities and places, local business investments, and people and skills. The Combined Authority area received almost £10 million in funding, covering 38 initiatives across six councils and running for three years from 2022-2025.

The projects are led by the relevant district or city council and examples of projects include supporting small businesses and entrepreneurship, improving careers education for all ages, skills development, expanding green spaces, exploring the possibility of new cycling and walking routes, reducing flood risk, improving the vitality of high streets and supporting arts and culture.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) aims to tackle the specific challenges of rural areas, including helping businesses grow, improving digital connectivity, and increasing access to community services and support. The districts benefitting from the REPF are East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire.

The £3.2 million fund launched in summer 2023 and is in delivery, with support already benefitting local businesses and communities. Further rounds of funding are coming forward and the fund is planned to be spent by March 2025.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Economic Growth and Community Development:

The allocation of almost £10 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has enabled the initiation of 38 projects across six councils within the Combined Authority area.

Empowerment of Local Leaders: The UKSPF initiative empowers local leaders by providing them with greater autonomy in decision-making regarding fund allocation and project implementation.

Targeted Support for Rural Areas: The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), totalling £3.2 million and benefiting districts such as East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and Huntingdonshire, addresses specific challenges faced by rural areas.



INVESTING IN CAMBRIDGE CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Mayor Dr Nik Johnson visited a number of sites in central Cambridge earmarked to benefit from a package of funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, including via the UKSPF. The visit included Cambridge market, a significant part of the city's heritage, supporting the local economy and attracting visitors. Three schemes, a joint project between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, aim to preserve the health and vitality of the market.

They are:

- £30,000 for a scheme which will enable 20 market traders in Greater Cambridge to apply for grants of £1,000 to enhance their current business operations, and access advice and support to help develop their business.
- £30,000 to fund The Youth Enterprise Support Programme which will support young people in Greater

Cambridge who want to become market traders to get started – for example by offering free pitches.

- £30,000 to fund a study into the benefits of markets across the Greater Cambridge area and to understand the conditions needed for their ongoing success and future development.

Mayor Dr Nik Johnson said:

“ It was great to see first-hand how our funding is planned to make a real difference to local residents and the visitor experience, providing a truly unique opportunity to invest back into the health and vitality of the city centre for the long-term. ”



VITA NOVA SOLUTIONS' PHENOMENAL GROWTH WITH GRANT SUPPORT'

A period of rapid growth begun at a Chatteris family business crediting business and grant support as a key contributor to success.

Vita-Nova Solutions provides wholesale automation services such as food packing robots for production lines and is taking bigger sales orders than ever, creating new jobs.

In 2023 Vita-Nova Solutions was one of eight firms to be awarded grant funding to help develop its growth plans in the first round of the Fenland Investment in Business Programme, funded through the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The programme has also provided the company free support and advice for its growth plans.

The funding paid for a 3D printer, which means it can design and manufacture parts for its automation systems itself and can deliver to customers quicker and at more competitive

rates. Director Paul Millard, his son, design director Keanu, 26, and Paul's wife Cheryl launched Vita-Nova Solutions at the end of 2019.

This year, it is signing a string of contracts that, at in the region of £750,000 in one case, are up to almost double that of its previous biggest sales. It's also in the process of developing a product that director Paul Millard believes to be a global first, with a huge global market, which he expects to bring to market in the next 12 months.

Paul said:

“ It's going to be a period of phenomenal growth from April onwards. ”

SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

Since September 2021 innovative Skills Bootcamps have been delivering fast, effective training to help individuals boost their careers or help employers upskill their workforce.

The Combined Authority has secured £2.8m in funding for several waves of Skill Bootcamps, with a focus on continually improving how the programme works.

Skills Bootcamps, flexible courses lasting up to 16 weeks, offer individuals the chance to acquire sought-after skills demanded by employers across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. These initiatives aim to enhance career prospects by tailoring training directly to the needs of the workplace and can include interviews with employers once the course completes. Courses come at no cost to learners.

They can be for people who want to change career, the unemployed who need a kick start getting back into the workplace, the self-employed, or people who want to advance in an existing job. They can also be a gateway to further training, including apprenticeships.

For employers, the Combined Authority has been deepening its connections with various sectors across the region to put on Skills Bootcamps directly linked to their skills needs and talent gaps, ensuring they are tailored to the needs of the local economy.

The courses offered continually update, depending on demand, and have included everything from electric vehicle maintenance, marketing, engineering, leadership skills, construction skills, and data analysis. The Combined Authority works with a variety of colleges, universities and training providers to ensure high quality learning is provided.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Impactful Training Initiatives:

Since September 2021, Skills Bootcamps have provided fast, effective training to individuals, securing millions in funding and continually improving program effectiveness. Notably, 31% of learners from Peterborough postcode areas participated, reflecting focused efforts to raise attainment levels in targeted areas.

Tailored Learning Opportunities: Positive engagement across all age groups, with 12% aged 50-59, supports the government's aim to support individuals aged 50+.

Industry-Relevant Training: Deepening connections with various sectors, the Combined Authority tailors Skills Bootcamps to address specific skills needs and talent gaps in the local economy.



CASE STUDY

GETTING STARTED IN ENGINEERING

A perfect example of the flexibility of Skills Bootcamps to meet skills needed in local industry was the Introduction to Engineering Skills Bootcamp which launched at the start of 2024.

The Combined Authority worked with Peterborough engineering companies Howden Turbo, Baker Perkins, as well as College of West Anglia to develop an intensive Skills Bootcamp course giving learners the skills they need for a career in the industry.

The Skills Bootcamp was in response to the companies wanting to expand their pool of talent for engineering apprenticeships. The training on offer included technical drawing, computer-aided design, fitting and welding to give a broad base of skills.

The 10-week courses offered a further incentive with the opportunity of an interview with Baker Perkins or Howden Turbo for their apprenticeship opportunities in 2024.

Sarah Worsley, Senior HR Officer from Baker Perkins, a brand of Schenck Process FPM comments said:



Being part of a manufacturing business dedicated to innovation and technical engineering, means we are continuously seeking out new talent, fresh opinions and insights. Joining a new business or changing careers is a big step. Therefore, using Skills Bootcamps as a method of seeking out potential apprentices and associates, gives those candidates the option to see what opportunities a career in manufacturing engineering and our company has to offer. Across 2024 we are committed to actively utilising the Bootcamps to attract apprentice engineers, who want the opportunity to learn and develop new skills for engineering in food and performance material industries.



CAREERS HUB

The Careers Hub supports high quality careers education in both primary and secondary schools and is a crucial part of the Combined Authority's ambition to create a world class skills ecosystem in the region.

It provides careers leaders in schools with resources and access to employers and the wider education sector to give young people the inspiration and resources they need to follow their dreams.

The Careers Hub has a network of Enterprise Co-ordinators who cover clusters of schools including provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative education. It has built links with employers, having a bank of senior business volunteers called Enterprise Advisors, who give schools their unique insights into the world of work, across a variety of sectors.

The Careers Hub is a partnership between the Combined Authority and the Careers and Enterprise Company. It aligns with the Combined Authority's wider skills ambition to create an 'all age' careers service for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Over the last 12 months, the Careers Hub has consistently reported an improvement in performance, with substantial increases in the number of schools achieving Gatsby Benchmark 1 (A stable careers programme), up 23% in the last year. The number of schools achieving three full Gatsby Benchmarks has increased by 17%, meaning that 94% of schools in the area are now achieve this.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Comprehensive Careers Support:

The Careers Hub plays a vital role in delivering high-quality careers education in primary and secondary schools, fostering partnerships between schools, employers, and the wider education sector to inspire and equip young people for future career paths.

Inclusive Provision: Through its network of Enterprise Coordinators and Enterprise Advisors, the Hub ensures provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative education, facilitating inclusive career guidance and support tailored to diverse student needs.

Performance Improvement: Over the past year, the Careers Hub has demonstrated significant performance improvements, with notable increases in the number of schools achieving Gatsby Benchmarks, reflecting its commitment to providing stable careers programs and comprehensive support to schools across the region.

CASE STUDY



START SMALL, DREAM BIG!

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Careers Hub launched a trailblazing primary school project in March 2023 as a part of the Careers and Enterprise Company's 'Start Small, Dream Big' careers in primary pilot. The pilot was delivered by a select group of Careers Hubs nationally and involving 64 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough primary schools.

Pupils and teachers were surveyed by ImpactEd at the beginning and end of the project to record its impact on their access to employers and exposure to careers-related learning. This data, informed by the experiences of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough pupils, will be returned to the Department of Education and used to design future opportunities.

Through the programme, lead teachers in each school were offered funded CPD training from Teach First, guiding them in creating a careers strategy, delivering careers-related projects and embedding careers related learning in the curriculum. Participating schools were also supported by Form the Future to deliver an 'employer encounter' - an opportunity for students to interact with an employer or visit a workplace. Sixty-six of these took place in total, including a large primary school careers fair, a 'DNA Day' hosted by Illumina, and a series of trips to the Cambridge University Institute of Astronomy and Department of Engineering.



CASE STUDY

COLLABORATING FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Meadowgate Academy in Wisbech, G's Fresh of Barwell, Soham and NHS Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, came together in Spring 2023 to produce two videos to support young people with additional needs prepare for entering the workplace. The purpose was to raise aspirations and support transition, along with offering students the opportunity to safely explore and gain valuable insights into the recruitment process.

A professional cameraman spent the day at Meadowgate speaking with students about how they felt about entering the workplace, and understanding how employers could support students with additional needs to enter the workplace.

Filming also took place out in the community, visiting some of the students whilst they were on work experience placements at a garage, a coffee shop, and a nursery. Employers reported a very positive experience of offering work placements and how with some support, they can not only offer experiences to young people with additional needs but have also identified a different way of attracting and diversifying their approach to new talent.

G's Fresh and NHS Addenbrooke's recruitment shared their experiences in the hope they can inform and inspire and other employers who may be interested in broadening their approach to inclusive recruitment.

The videos are available for all schools to use to inspire and prepare their students for the world of work as well as being used to promote inclusive careers to employers.

www.growthworkswithskills.com



ADULT EDUCATION

The Combined Authority has been continually improving adult education in the region since the devolution of the budget from August 2019.

Education and training courses for adults aged 19+ in England are funded through the adult education budget. We have been aligning spend in the budget to the Combined Authority's wider goals for inclusive growth and prosperity to the region, reducing inequalities and delivering opportunities to more people and places.

A key aim has been to target low skilled and low paid residents in the workforce particularly, but not exclusively, in Peterborough and Fenland. As well as getting those people on to courses, the Adult Education Budget team has also worked with employers and training providers to support next steps into the workplace, apprenticeships or further training.

A significant consequence of this devolved skills funding has been a rebalancing of the region's skills provision to significantly increase courses of value to local employers, particularly level 3 courses which grew from 0.9% to 4% of enrolments.

Increased local flexibility has also enabled us to offer more outstanding support to learners from less advantaged backgrounds. For example, increases in English for Speakers of Other Languages enrolments from 4,717 (21/22) to 5,890 (22/23) have been driven by refugee re-settlement programmes such as Homes for Ukraine. The leadership of the Combined Authority in the region for ESOL courses has been a shining example of the benefits of local budgetary control.

With the publication of Census 2021 data highlighting educational inequalities and economic inactivity, we continue building momentum with our ambitious package of local funding policy changes and flexibility. We expect our progressive policies will help 'level up' skills across the sub-region and widen participation in adult learning, and just a few of these include:

- Disadvantage uplift - targeting and support for residents in the most relatively deprived areas of the sub-region.
- £250 per learner under our Youth Offer for 19-23 Entitlement for enrichment, tutorial, work experience and more.
- Fully funded first Level 2 and first Level 3 qualifications.
- Fully funded ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).
- Increase funding for Essential Skills qualifications by 10 per cent (English, math's, and Essential Digital Skills - entitlements) claimed on achievement.
- Extending our Low Wage Scheme to £22,500 before fees are payable.
- Our Bursary for Care Leavers, 19-22 increases to £1,500, with an enhanced package of support.
- An entitlement to fully funded learning for individuals and their dependents, covered by our Armed Forces Covenant.

Partnerships have also been central, and we are working with the Chambers of Commerce, DWP, Public Health, our constituent authorities and many other partners on a shared vision to ensure that our collective contribution is much greater than the sum of its parts.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Strategic Investment:

Improved adult education in the region, aligning spending with wider goals for inclusive growth and prosperity, with £12.57 million spent, covering 84% of the allocation, benefiting over 11,000 active learners.

Increased Accessibility: Targeting low-skilled and low-paid residents, particularly in areas like Peterborough and Fenland, the Adult Education Budget team has achieved an impressive 17% increase in enrolments, with 83% of adult skills learning fully funded and 44% of learning aims delivered to Peterborough residents.

Enhanced Support: Through partnerships and policy changes, the Authority has provided enhanced support, including a £1,500 Bursary for Care Leavers, an entitlement to fully funded learning for individuals and their dependents under the Armed Forces Covenant, and an extended Low Wage Scheme, demonstrating a commitment to 'levelling up' skills and reducing educational inequalities across the sub-region.



 **CASE STUDY**

CARE LEAVERS: AJ'S STORY



But a change of foster placement and then a move into semi-independent accommodation ahead of her 18th birthday, along with some difficulties in her personal life, meant she did not complete her qualification.

She then went on to have a series of short-term jobs in shops and hospitality, with periods of unemployment during the Covid-19 lockdowns and suffered poor mental and physical health.

But by January 2022, AJ, who was then aged 20, was in her own council accommodation and felt settled enough to focus on her studies once more. Thanks to the Combined Authority's commitment to care leavers like AJ, the CWA was able to enrol her in a one-year course to complete her Level 3 qualification in childcare.

In September 2022, AJ worked as a teaching assistant in a primary school in the region and now has a nursery practitioner role in a local nursery, working with two and three-year-olds.

AJ said:



The bursary helped me in more ways than one. It helped with transport, lunches, and personal care items and college equipment. Being a young person in care or a care leaver is hard enough without the stress of college and knowing what you want to do with your life. It's full of making decisions you don't even know if you're ready for. The bursary helped with knowing how to budget money, how to prioritise essentials.

Now I have my own council accommodation, a puppy, and I work full time in the childcare industry. All of this wouldn't have been possible if I didn't return back to education. The bursary made that possible.



During the year, the milestone was reached of 100 young people leaving the care system receiving a bursary set up by the Combined Authority to fund education and training.

Through its devolved control of the adult education budget, the Combined Authority offers offering funded opportunities at colleges and training centres for care leavers aged 19 to 22, including a Care Leavers Bursary of up to £1,500 per year.

It also provides care leavers with independent living and financial literacy training and support, free breakfasts at selected colleges, a free bicycle for eligible young people who complete a cycling proficiency test and enhanced careers advice and guidance.

One person who has benefited from the bursary is AJ. She started her Level 3 childcare course at the College of West Anglia (CWA) as a 16-year-old and was an excellent and motivated student.



CASE STUDY



CARE LEAVERS COVENANT

The Combined Authority Board made the decision in September 2023 to recognise care as a protected characteristic and in October 2023 the Combined Authority announced they had officially signed the Care Leavers Covenant.

By joining the Care Leavers Covenant, the Combined Authority is taking a step towards a more equitable future, where every young person has access to opportunities and resources that help them reach their full potential.

What is the Care Leavers Covenant?

The Care Leavers Covenant is an initiative that focuses on creating better opportunities and support for young people who have experienced time in the care system. It aims to ensure that care leavers have the same life chances as their peers and that they receive the support they need to thrive in adulthood. We're proud to stand with this cause and play our part in this vital mission.

What does that mean for the Combined Authority?

As a Combined Authority, we are committed to:

- Providing a Care Leavers Bursary for Care Peavers aged 19-22, who are resident in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and enrolled on a course funded by us.
- Independent and impartial careers advice and guidance through the National Careers Service.
- Provide work experience and apprenticeship opportunities ourselves and broker opportunities from local businesses.
- As an employer, we have signed up to become a care leaver friendly employer.
- We will offer guaranteed interviews when Care Leavers meet the minimum criteria.

More information can be found here:

mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/cambridgeshire-peterborough-combined-authority-employment-opportunities/



MULTIPLY

The Government allocated £4 million to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to enhance numeracy skills throughout the region under the national Multiply initiative. Colleges and training providers across the area are offering opportunities for individuals to improve their maths abilities and number confidence, to boost everything from effective household budget management to acquiring the necessary skills for career progression.

Some of the courses this year have included, Cost of Living Budgeting, Bridges to GCSE, Keeping up with the Children, Excel for Beginners, Energy Saving At Home and Game On! – teaching maths concepts to families through board games.

Demand in some areas has been so strong that the Combined Authority topped up the Government Multiply funding to allow more people to access courses.

Delivery is taking place in libraries, community centres, schools and colleges. The Multiply scheme runs until 31 March 2025 and our focus this year is to have a bigger impact on number confidence generally, but also helping people to feel more confident going back to or progressing in work, supporting employers to upskill their employees with number skills and supporting parents to be able to help their children with maths.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Expanding Numeracy Skills:

With £4 million allocated under the Multiply initiative, the Combined Authority has facilitated over 2,500 participants in longer courses and 1,700 shorter ones, doubling its target for supporting employers and individuals in the workplace and training 33 Numeracy Champions through National Numeracy.

Diverse Course Offerings: Courses such as Cost of Living Budgeting, Bridges to GCSE, and Excel for Beginners have empowered individuals to improve their math abilities, with nearly 1,600 participants engaging in the NN Numeracy Challenge, contributing to enhanced number confidence and career progression opportunities.

Accessible Delivery: Delivery taking place in libraries, community centres, schools, and colleges has ensured accessibility, allowing more people to access courses and gain necessary skills for effective household budget management and career advancement, while also supporting parents in assisting their children with math.

CASE STUDY

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

One beneficiary of the Multiply programme has been refugees from Ukraine. Training provider Runway Training has described how beneficial having free-to-access skills has been in helping them settle.

The most common courses undertaken by the Ukrainians were Effective Family Budgeting and Employability and Financial Awareness in the Workplace. Multiply courses can be held in Ukrainian, where needed.

In the budgeting course, learners were given a handy expense tracking spreadsheet and were encouraged to put their learning into practice as homework.

The employability course gave tips for job applications and CVs and more information about the use of numbers and finance in the workplace.

A course was also launched called Energy Saving at Home, aiming to improve money saving and sustainability in heating homes.

With the huge upheaval in leaving a country at war, the skills offered through Multiply are bringing real benefits to those most in need.



ARU PETERBOROUGH

ARU Peterborough is a new, employment-focused university aiming to tackle a long-standing 'cold spot' for higher education in the city.

Made possible by devolution, and a Partnership with Peterborough City Council and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), ARU Peterborough opened to the first students in September 2022. It's launch marked the start of realising a decades-long ambition to build a new university in the city.

The courses provided are rooted in the needs of the local economy, with local employers acting as co-creators of the curriculum, linking the skills coming out of the university with demand in workplace.

This is aimed at supporting jobs and economic growth, opening up more opportunity to local communities. More long term, the university aims to sit at the heart of an innovation ecosystem, blending research and entrepreneurship and creating the high skill, high wage economy to level up the city.

2023/24 has been another year of exceptional progress for the campus, notably through award wins and the progress of the university's third phase building.

'The Lab' will offer a publicly accessible, flexible space for exhibits and events to inspire the local community in science and technology, while also bringing them closer to the research of students. It will also provide additional teaching space in the rest of the building. Starting construction in Spring 2023, the striking building remains on course for completion in summer 2024. This phase is funded by a £20m grant from the Government's Levelling Up fund; £2m in recycled Local Growth Funds from the Business Board; in kind land contribution from Peterborough City Council, £4m from ARU, and additional funding of £1.9m each from the three partners.

The second phase Innovation and Research Centre has seen the opening of a state-of-the-art extended reality facility, developed by ARU, to support more immersive, cutting-edge learning for students. It will also be made available for local employers in support of their skills and training needs.

With the university now well established, the partners are looking towards future phases, with the aim of seeking further Government investment to create a new research institute in technologies of the future, linking academia, innovative research and development, businesses, and entrepreneurship. An early phase proposal for a green energy research centre on the campus, focused on hydrogen, was showcased at a Parliamentary reception in spring 2024.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



A year of awards and nominations:

University of the Year at the UK Social Mobility Awards, in recognition of the role ARU Peterborough is playing in advancing social mobility.

Finalist in the Local Government Chronicle Awards in the Partnership category, for outstanding partnership working.

Won in the University Alliance (UK) Awards for partnership working and collaboration and the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE) awards in the Impact Initiative of the Year category.

Shortlisted for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community award in the prestigious 2023 Times Higher Education Awards with ARU winning in the University of the Year category.

The striking design of University House saw it shortlisted for the Architects' Journal Architecture Awards 2023.

CASE STUDY

DAN SHOWS IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN



Dan said:

“

After I retook and passed my exams, I wanted to explore a career I found interesting and that I could excel in. ARU Peterborough looked ideal as it was right on my doorstep.

”

Despite his struggles at school, Dan has been able to thrive in a university environment. His tutors have provided him with support for his dyslexia and the range of modules and resources online have allowed him to study at home, away from distraction.

Alongside his academic studies, ARU Peterborough's links with industry partners have allowed Dan to work part time in a biomedical laboratory, something that has enhanced his learning.

Alongside his academic studies, ARU Peterborough's links with industry partners have allowed Dan to work part time in a biomedical laboratory, something that has enhanced his learning.

“The university got me the job at a local lab, and it's been great to be able to get that hands on experience with my degree course while also earning some money.”

For Dan, going to university in his 40s has been a positive experience that has opened the door to opportunities he never knew he would be able to grasp.

He added: “It's never too late to learn or change your career path so long as you knuckle down and work hard at it, you can achieve whatever you set your mind to.”

43-year-old Dan Arrowsmith's story is a great example of the opportunity ARU Peterborough is bringing to local people no matter their age or background.

The Peterborough man had his academic ambitions dampened when he left school without any GCSEs and was told he should look for a vocational trade. Struggling with his dyslexia, Dan spent 22 years working in kitchens climbing the ranks to head chef before life became very difficult. Finding himself without work during the pandemic, Dan returned to college to retake his exams passing them with merits and distinctions.

Aged 42, Dan took on a challenge that many his age would not dream of doing and applied to ARU Peterborough, the city's new university, to take on a biomedical degree.

ENABLING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Providing the infrastructure and support to enable communities across the region to be adaptable to environmental and climate, financial and social crises. Making Cambridgeshire and Peterborough a great place to live and work and enhancing cultural opportunities.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Between 2023 and 2024, the Combined Authority has made significant strides in addressing the issue of affordable housing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through various initiatives.

One notable project is the Northminster Build-to-rent Scheme, which received over £12.5 million in funding from the Combined Authority's Affordable Housing Programme. This scheme, developed by Cross Keys Homes in partnership with Willmott Dixon, offers quality rental dwellings at 80% of market rent prices. These homes cater to key workers, young professionals, and lower-income earners, providing them with secure accommodation in the city centre. The rent is capped at 80% of the market norm, ensuring affordability and stability for tenants, who benefit from longer lease agreements ranging from 1 to 3 years. The Indigo development, comprising 1, 2, and 3-bedroom flats and duplexes, also includes two commercial retail units, further enhancing the community.

Additionally, the completion of 94 homes at Alconbury Weald, funded with a grant of over £4.4 million from the Combined Authority's Affordable Housing Programme, is another significant achievement.

These homes, managed by Longhurst Housing Association, consist of a mix of affordable rented and shared ownership properties, primarily for key workers. Ranging from one to four bedrooms, these homes provide essential housing options for individuals in Huntingdonshire.

Overall, these initiatives demonstrate the Combined Authority's commitment to addressing the housing needs of diverse communities, particularly key workers and lower-income earners, by providing affordable and sustainable housing solutions.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Effective Delivery: 94 homes completed at Alconbury Weald for key workers.

Substantial funding: £16.9 million in funding provided from the Combined Authority's Affordable Housing Programme



GREATER SOUTH EAST NET ZERO HUB

The Combined Authority hosts the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) which is funded by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.

We work collaboratively with local authorities, public sector organisations, and their stakeholders to support the development, delivery and financing of local net zero projects.

The UK Government and local authorities share a common goal to deliver Net Zero, but this can only be achieved if we work together. The GSENZH has a unique position as an interface between national government and our regions and localities. We are committed to addressing critical sustainability issues and recognise the scale and urgency of the challenges posed by climate change. We recognise the complex challenges we face, and our central focus is to support net-zero solutions for our clients, whilst growing their commercial capabilities.

Over the last 12 months, the Hub has recruited an additional 20 roles and embedded key new positions to deliver valuable support, capacity, and capability for existing and new projects while keeping a close eye on emerging technology, digital transformation, and the impact AI will have on accelerating net zero ambitions.

Maxine Narburgh, Director of the Greater South East Net Zero Hub, said:

“

Local delivery of net zero matters, a third of emissions are dependent on sectors directly shaped by local authority practice, policy or partnerships. National policies can drive the change, but delivery needs to be focused through regional and local knowledge and networks delivering place-based solutions, the Hub is committed to supporting public sector organisations.

”



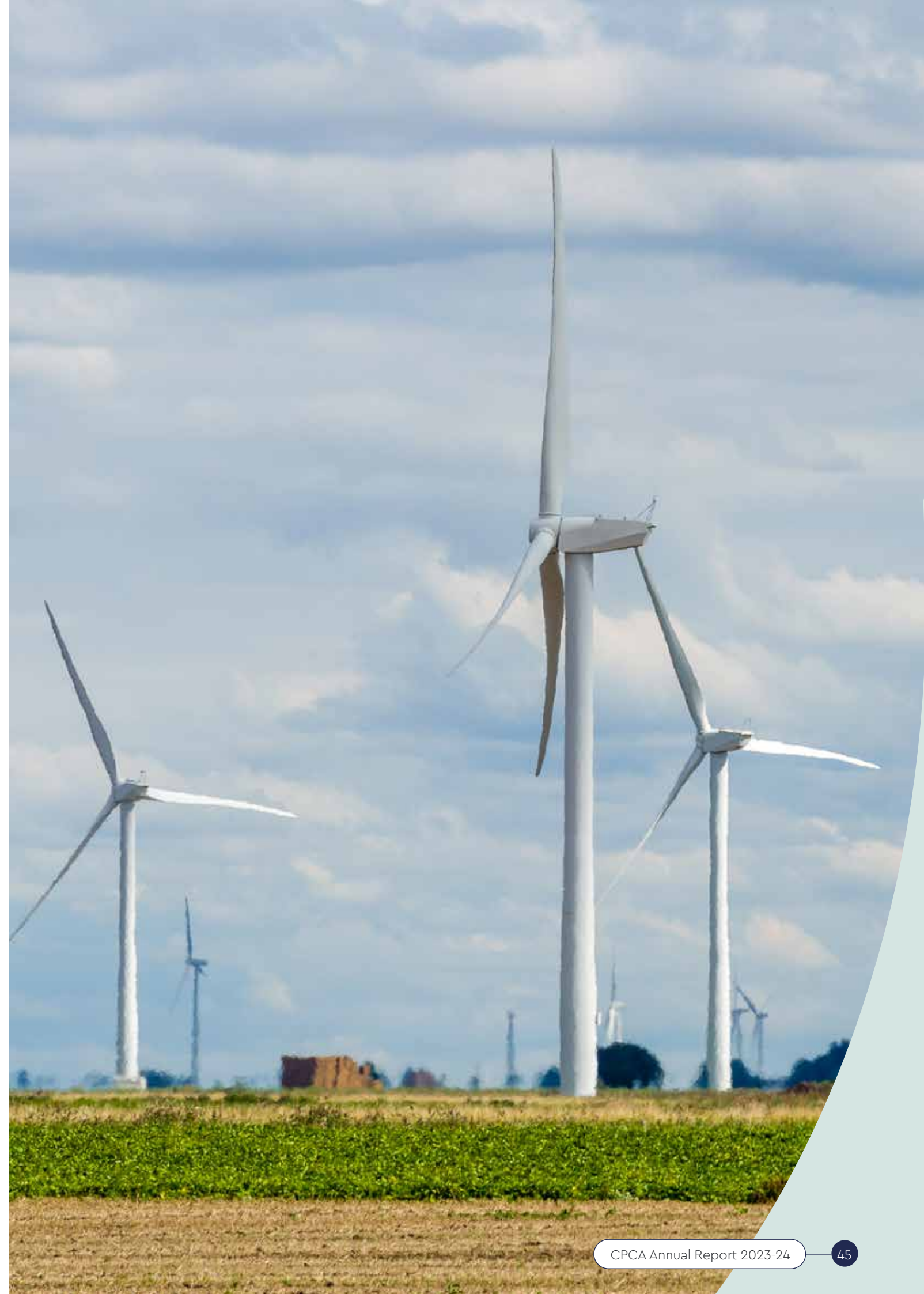
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Facilitating Financing: The Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) has facilitated £50 million in private finance for client projects, demonstrating its effectiveness in securing investment for local net zero initiatives.

Significant Project Impact: With £1.116 billion worth of projects currently being supported or successfully completed, the Hub has played a pivotal role in advancing local net zero efforts, contributing to a substantial estimated saving of 10.4 million tonnes of CO₂e lifetime emissions.

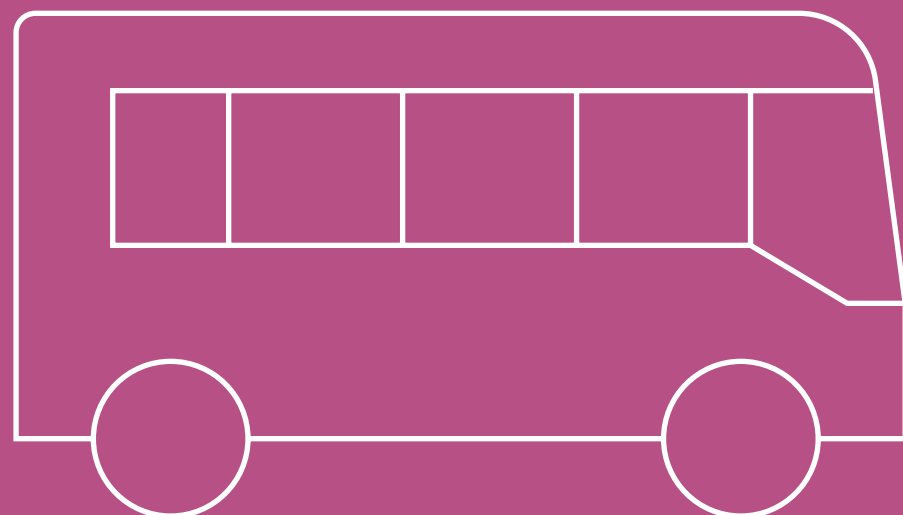
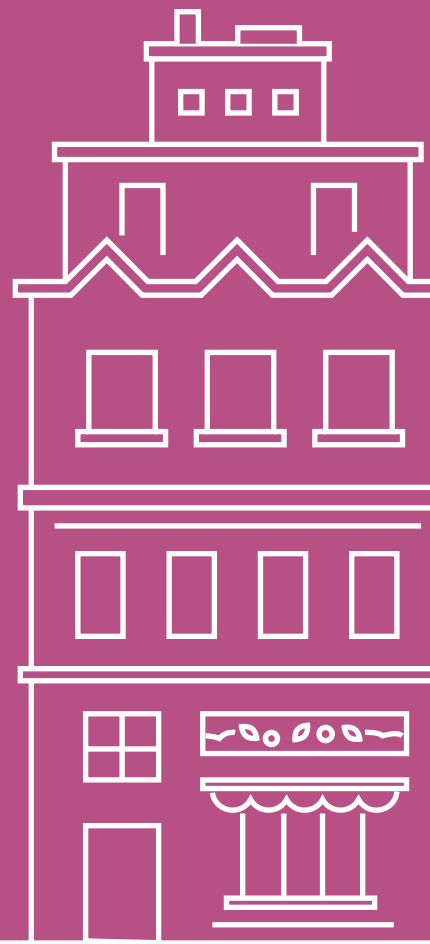
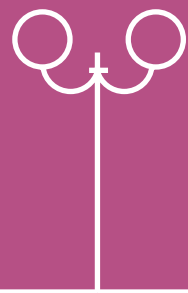
Strategic Growth: The recruitment of 20 additional roles and the embedding of key positions reflects the Hub's commitment to expanding its capacity and capability, ensuring it remains at the forefront of supporting regional and local efforts towards achieving net zero emissions.

Award Winning – In March, GSENZH received the Regional Large-Scale Project of the Year Award at the South East leg of the Energy Efficiency Awards 2024. The award celebrated the Hub's work, in collaboration with E.ON, on the Sustainable Warmth retrofitting project.



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY

Creating digital and physical connections to communities, professional networks, health services, leisure, nature and places of employment and education. Reducing the need for travel with more services located within communities.



ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

The A1260 safety and improvement schemes, led by the Combined Authority in collaboration with Peterborough City Council, aim to enhance the strategic road network crucial for Peterborough's development. These initiatives, including the A1260 Junction 15 and Junction 32/3 projects, target reducing congestion, cutting carbon emissions, promoting active travel, and supporting business and housing growth in the area.

The Junction 15 project focuses on enhancing a critical grade-separated junction, improving journey times and safety for commuters through the addition of a third lane on the northbound stretch of the A1260 Nene Parkway and circulatory reconfiguration. Emphasising connectivity to public transportation and green spaces, this scheme prioritizes pedestrian and cyclist-friendly infrastructure while enhancing biodiversity through bulb and tree planting. Similarly, the Junction 32/3 project addresses congestion and safety concerns, enhancing accessibility, promoting sustainable travel options, and contributing to biodiversity net gain objectives, marking a significant milestone in optimizing road infrastructure for the region's growth and prosperity.

The completion of this project in April 2024 signifies a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to optimize road infrastructure for the region's continued growth and prosperity.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Improved Journey Times and Safety: Notably enhanced commuting experiences and safety for road users, contributing to smoother traffic flow and reduced congestion.

Enhanced Connectivity and Sustainability: Both projects prioritize connectivity to public transportation and green spaces, fostering a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly environment while promoting active travel options and biodiversity net gain.

Successful Completion and Public Accessibility: With practical completion achieved for both schemes, the projects are now fully operational, delivering immediate benefits to the community and supporting Peterborough's growth aspirations.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

This year marked significant progress in local active travel initiatives. With the recruitment of an Active Travel Lead by the Combined Authority and the establishment of an Active Travel Centre of Excellence by Cambridgeshire City Council, efforts were intensified in developing the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan and promoting behavioural change activities. Moreover, the creation of an Active Travel Specialist Advisory Board ensured robust oversight and guidance for major active travel projects, leveraging input from key stakeholders across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Strengthening partnerships with central government, particularly Active Travel England, highlighted the region's commitment to active travel. A visit from Active Travel Commissioner Chris Boardman and CEO Danny Williams bolstered collaboration and earned the Combined Authority a high capability rating, translating into substantial funding allocations. Notably, £4,996,590 was secured for active travel infrastructure, alongside £1,234,380 for revenue work, supporting diverse initiatives such as promoting active travel to schools, consulting on new routes, and running the Love to Ride campaign. This funding facilitated the implementation of nine projects, including construction of the Buckden to Brampton cycleway and forthcoming development of the Thorpe Wood Cycleway, signalling significant strides toward enhancing active travel infrastructure and engagement across the region.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Enhanced Funding Allocation:

Securing £6,230,970 in funding for regional active travel development underscores the commitment to improving active travel infrastructure and engagement across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Community Engagement Success:

Engaging 2,546 residents in the Love to Ride campaign has resulted in over 1,328,529 miles cycled, demonstrating significant community participation and support for active travel initiatives.

Strengthened Partnerships and

Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships with central government and earning a high capability rating from Active Travel England has facilitated collaboration and substantial funding allocations, enabling the implementation of nine projects aimed at enhancing active travel infrastructure and promoting sustainable mobility options.

E-SCOOTERS

The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan prioritizes reducing road traffic by 15%, emphasizing sustainable travel alternatives as key solutions. The e-scooter trial and e-bike initiative in Cambridge have emerged as popular choices, offering environmentally friendly transportation options that align with the city's sustainability goals. Since October 2020, these initiatives have gained significant traction, with a total of 3.2 million trips taken using Voi e-scooters or e-bikes, effectively replacing 1 million car trips and resulting in a reduction of 500 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

With an average distance travelled of 2km, the e-scooters and e-bikes have become integral to commuter journeys, with the route from the train station to the city centre emerging as the most popular. To enhance accessibility, various discounts are available, catering to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those with low income, emergency services personnel, military personnel, and students. Moreover, the operation of the trial has created opportunities for new skills and jobs, including roles such as vehicle mechanics, fleet specialists, and fleet managers, contributing to local employment growth.

As the trial extends until 31 May 2026, the impact of e-scooters and e-bikes on sustainable travel patterns and reduced carbon emissions is expected to continue, reinforcing their role as effective alternatives to traditional car travel.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Substantial Trip Reduction:

Over 3.2 million trips have been taken using e-scooters and e-bikes since October 2020, effectively replacing 1 million car trips and contributing to reduced road traffic congestion.

Significant Carbon Emission Reduction:

The adoption of e-scooters and e-bikes has led to a reduction of 500 tonnes of CO2 emissions, highlighting their role in promoting environmentally sustainable transportation solutions.

Enhanced Accessibility and Inclusivity:

Various discounts and incentives have made e-scooters and e-bikes more accessible to individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, including low-income earners, emergency services personnel, military personnel, and students, fostering inclusivity in sustainable travel initiatives.

LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN (LTCP)

The approval of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) by the Combined Authority in November 2023 marks a pivotal step in addressing the region's transportation challenges and opportunities. This comprehensive plan outlines strategies to ensure sustainable growth and development across the county, providing a menu of measures that can be tailored to meet the plan's overarching vision and objectives. With a focus on collaboration, the LTCP required the approval of the Highways Authority for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, as well as consultation with relevant District Councils, ensuring alignment with local priorities and needs.

Moving forward, the implementation of the LTCP involves the development of associated sub-strategies, approved by the CA Board in March 2024. These strategies, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, aim to translate the LTCP's vision into actionable projects and initiatives. Aligned with the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Strategic Asset Fund (SAF), the projects selected for implementation will be supported by funding and closely tied to the LTCP's goals for sustainable transport infrastructure and connectivity.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Development of Comprehensive Transportation Strategy:

The approval of the LTCP provides a strategic framework for addressing transportation challenges and opportunities, ensuring sustainable growth and development across the region.

Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement: The LTCP emphasises collaboration with stakeholders, including Highways Authorities and District Councils, to ensure alignment with local priorities and needs, fostering a unified approach to transportation planning.

Implementation Readiness: Approval of associated sub-strategies and alignment with funding mechanisms such as the MTFP and SAF signal readiness for the implementation phase, enabling the translation of LTCP goals into actionable projects and initiatives for sustainable transport infrastructure.

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

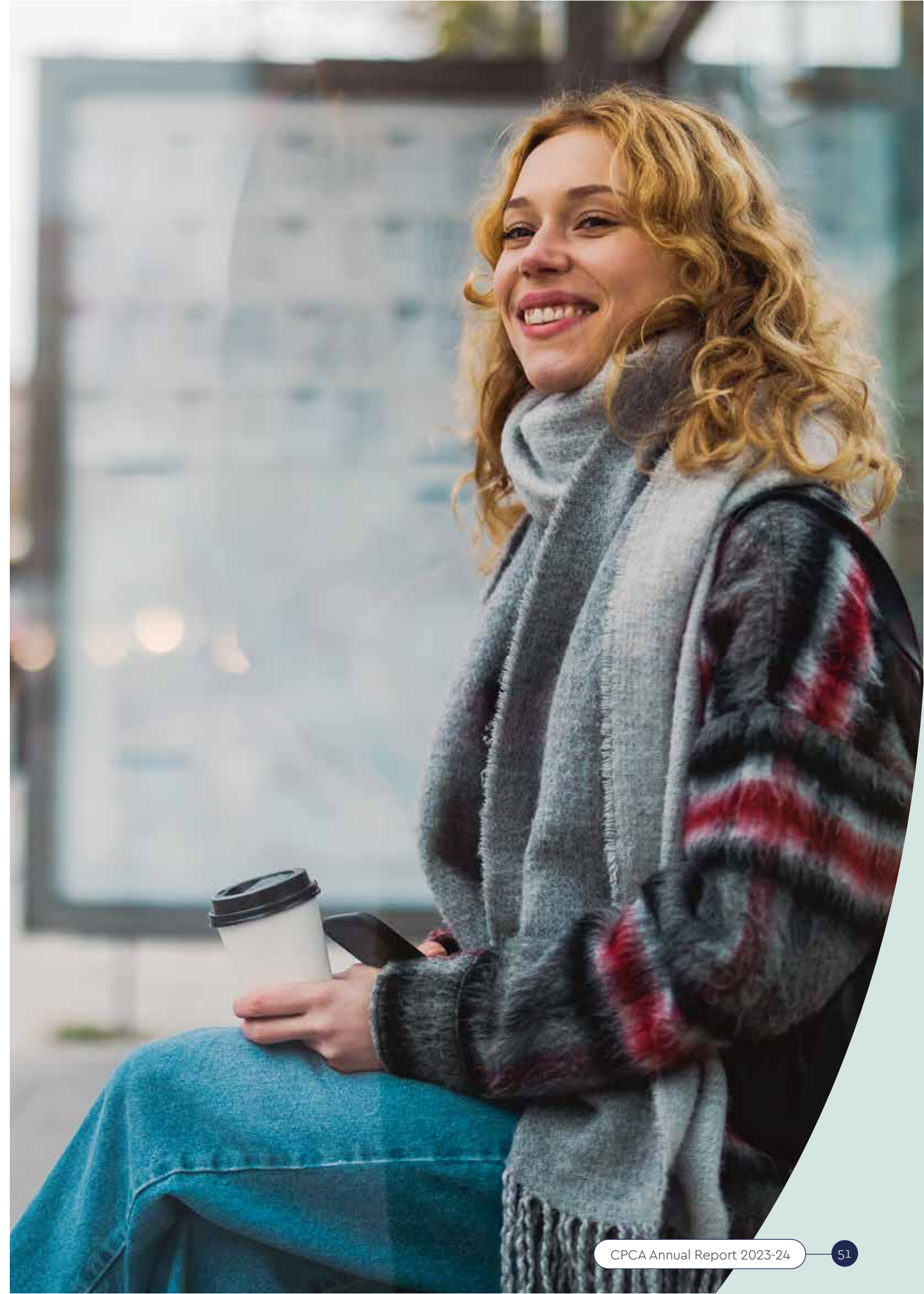
Worked commenced in Autumn of 2023 to create an Infrastructure Delivery Framework (IDF). The IDF project aims to support sustainable growth across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by identifying and addressing infrastructure barriers that may impede development. The Combined Authority has already highlighted the need to look at water and energy needs.

The key aspects of the IDF report will include:

- **Insightful Analysis:** insight into immediate and longer-term barriers impacting the delivery of sustainable growth in the region, with a focus on key themes such as energy, water supply, green/blue natural capital, and connectivity.

- **Financial Clarity:** The IDF report will enable the Combined Authority and its partners to clearly articulate the financial investment required to address identified barriers.
- **Accessible Evidence Base:** The report will establish an evidence base that remains accessible and usable by local authorities, ensuring transparency and informed decision-making.

Once complete the framework will outline the next steps for action, reporting to committee in June 2024.



ACHIEVING BEST VALUE AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

Fulfilling our duty of Best Value, by making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which our functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Addressing and embedding the key improvements set out in the External Auditor's letter and Best Value Notice and, in doing so, enabling the region to access funding and investment to support the delivery of our strategic objectives.



EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Throughout the period of this Annual Report, the Combined Authority has been on an ambitious journey of change and transformation; to enable us to deliver against our five strategic objectives and mayoral priorities.

With the support of our Independent Improvement Board, and Constituent Councils, the Combined Authority has successfully delivered, or commenced, several key priority activities to enable our continued improvement.

These activities have been grouped into four themes with demonstrable evidence of progress provided for each.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Combined Authority embraced its convening role by bringing together local and national politicians, business leaders, partner organisations and community groups to host two successful summits in 2023, one focused on Rail and the other on Climate. The summits allowed the Combined Authority to foster collaboration to define and then advocate for solutions to the challenges we face.

In Autumn 2023, Combined Authority Board approved funding for two key initiatives, the development of a State of the Region Report 2024 and the creation of a Shared Ambition for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Work commenced on both projects in late 2023, with a high-level Working Group established bringing together technical colleagues from Constituent Councils and Stakeholders. An Engagement Group was also created, enabling a joined-up approach to engagement with and avoiding duplication with our partners.

As part of the development of a Shared Ambition, the Combined Authority hosted the first of three workshops with Combined Authority Board and Constituent Council Chief Executives in January 2024 which was followed by a wider session with over 70 stakeholders in March.

CULTURE, CONFIDENCE & CAPACITY

Throughout 2023-24 the Combined Authority launched our CIVIL Values putting Collaboration, Integrity, Vision, Innovation and Leadership at the heart of everything we do; both internally and externally.

Embedding the CIVIL Values is an important part of our ongoing organizational development and ensuring the Combined Authority is an employer of choice for both existing and potential future employees.

We have also established a regular pattern of staff surveys and recruited a dedicated Internal Communications Advisor as part of our ongoing delivery of our Staff Engagement Strategy.

The results from our staff surveys shows our people feel more valued, better led and are more likely to recommend us as a great place to work.

Also, throughout 2023-24, new, highly experienced people have joined us in permanent senior roles and now have a robust Corporate Management Team in place to spearhead the organisation's ongoing development.



DELIVERY

In Autumn 2023, the Combined Authority became the first to adopt, following approval from DLUHC, a Single Assurance Framework (SAF). The SAF sets out key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency and legal compliance and for ensuring value for money is achieved across our investments.

In addition to the SAF, the Combined Authority also adopted a new Risk Management Framework and a new Performance Management Framework to improve the delivery of current and future projects.

These improved ways of working will not only strengthen the way projects are delivered but also how projects are developed throughout their life cycle and ultimately drive better outcomes for the residents and businesses of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.

The Combined Authority has also commenced our next Gateway Review, which is the process used by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to assess the impact of our investments. A Local Evaluation Framework was approved by DLUHC in Summer 2023 and work on the next phase, the Mid-Term Report, began in Autumn 2023.

GOVERNANCE

The Combined Authority's governance processes have been strengthened, including the adoption of a revised Constitution and Member Officer Protocol by Combined Authority Board. A Medium-Term Financial Plan and refreshed Corporate Strategy were approved in January 2024, following a six-week public consultation period.

The role of the Combined Authority's Thematic Committees has evolved with the respective Committees now overseeing thematic policy and making informed recommendations to the Combined Authority Board, empowering our Elected Members to make informed decisions.

The Business Board, the former Local Enterprise Partnership for the region, has taken on a new role ensuring the needs of our businesses are considered in our decision-making process.



